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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER
NSC FOR COURVILLE AND SHORTLEY

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SUBJECT: SLM/MINAWI ADVISORS WARN OF FIGHTING IN DARFUR

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES CAMERON HUME; REASONS: 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) On August 25 senior SLM/Minawi advisers told CDA Hume that fighting may escalate in Darfur within two weeks. Dr. Salah al-Haj Manna said that Presidential Adviser Majzoub Al Khalifa had told him that all funding for SLM/Minawi, including payments of subsistence bills for lodging in Khartoum, would be withheld until Minni Minawi endorsed President BASHIR,s rejection of UN peacekeeping in Darfur. Dr. Manna affirmed that he personally had paid hotel and food expenses for Minawi,s presence in Khartoum. He said that the lack of any support for the SLM/Minawi forces in the field was having a much worse effect. Previously they had no problem securing food, arms, and fuel by raiding government stores, but since the DPA had been signed they had not done this. The situation of the forces was becoming dire.

¶2. (C) Dr. Manna drew attention to Minawi,s press release of August 24, in which the SLA accused the government of not implementing the DPA. The press release: demanded that the international community take a firm position on the problems impeding implementation of the DPA; accused the NCP of not cooperating in implementing the DPA; affirmed its own commitment to the rule of law, democracy, and the building of a new Sudan; and, confirmed its commitment to the DPA. The SLA wanted a UN force in Darfur, but it expected the international community to take action to bring this about.

¶3. (C) Hume asked how the SLM saw the prospects for implementation of President Bashir,s security plan for Darfur. Dr. Manna said that the government was actively gathering its forces, including a large number of Popular Defense Forces units. (Embassy comment: many are former janjaweed now shifted to government payrolls. End comment.) Either the National Redemption Front forces will try to move south through the area east of El Fasher, where President Bashir has said the army will &stop and destroy8 them, or within two weeks the army will find a pretext to attack, probably in the same area. Adviser Ali Traio added that if SLM units do not join the fight on the side of the army, there is a good chance that the army will attack them as well. Dr. Manna said it would be difficult for SLM forces without fresh supplies, but he predicted that the army would be no more successful in 2006 than it had been in 2003 and ¶2004.

¶4. (C) Hume said that A/S Frazer would arrive on August 25 and had asked for a meeting with Minawi. Traio said that the government,s threatening tactics had put the forces in the field into a hard place; either they would get some basic support or they would have to fend for themselves. Dr. Manna said they would consult with Minawi on arranging a meeting with A/S Frazer.
HUME